

Steps in the 2010 National Merit® Scholarship Competition

1,500,000 Entrants. In October 2008, U.S. high school students who take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) and meet other program requirements will enter the 2010 competition for National Merit Scholarship Program recognition and scholarships. Nearly all program participants (entrants) will be juniors planning to enter college in 2010.

PARTICIPANTS WHO QUALIFY FOR NATIONAL MERIT PROGRAM RECOGNITION

50,000 High Scorers. NMSC uses PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores (the sum of critical reading, mathematics, and writing skills scores) to determine participants who qualify for program recognition. In April 2009, high-scoring participants from every state will be offered the College Plans Reporting Service. These students will be invited to name two colleges or universities to which they would like to be referred by NMSC.

34,000 Commended Students. In late September 2009, more than two-thirds of the 50,000 high scorers will receive Letters of Commendation in recognition of their outstanding academic promise, but they will not continue in the competition for National Merit Scholarships. However, some of these students may be candidates for Special Scholarships provided by corporate and business sponsors.

16,000 Semifinalists. In early September 2009, nearly a third of the 50,000 high scorers will be notified that they have qualified as Semifinalists. Semifinalists are the highest-scoring entrants in each state. NMSC will notify them through their schools and provide scholarship applications and materials explaining requirements to advance in the competition for National Merit Scholarships to be offered in 2010.

15,000 Finalists. In February 2010, Semifinalists who meet academic and other requirements will be notified that they have advanced to Finalist standing. All National Merit Scholarship winners (Merit Scholar® awardees) will be chosen from this group of Finalists, based on their abilities, skills, and accomplishments.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

1,500 Special Scholarship recipients. Beginning in March 2010, NMSC will notify winners of Special Scholarships provided by corporate sponsors. Recipients, chosen from candidates sent scholarship applications in December 2009, will be outstanding students (although not Finalists) who meet their sponsors' eligibility criteria. Sponsors will handle public announcement of their Special Scholarship winners.

8,200 Merit Scholarship® winners. Beginning in March 2010, NMSC will notify winners of the three types of National Merit Scholarships:

- National Merit® \$2500 Scholarships
- Corporate-sponsored scholarships
- College-sponsored scholarships

In April, May, and July, NMSC will release names of Merit Scholar designees to news media for public announcement.

National Merit Scholarship Corporation

2008-09 Important Dates for Schools

2008	
August 19	Posters announcing entry to the 2010 competitions of the National Merit Scholarship Program and the National Achievement Scholarship Program are mailed to principals.
August 26	Notification of 16,000 Semifinalists in the 2009 National Merit Program and National Merit Scholarship application materials are mailed to principals.
August 29	Notification of 1,600 Semifinalists in the 2009 National Achievement Program and National Achievement Scholarship application materials are mailed to principals.
September 10	Release to media names of 2009 National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists.
September 16	Notification to principals of Commended Students in the 2009 National Merit Program.
September 23	Notification to principals of Outstanding Participants in the 2009 National Achievement Program who are being referred to U.S. colleges and universities.
September 24	Release to media names of 2009 National Achievement Scholarship Program Semifinalists.
October 15 or 18	Schools administer the 2008 PSAT/NMSQT on one of these dates for entry to NMSC's 2010 programs.
October 4, November 1, December 6	Authorized SAT administrations for Semifinalists in NMSC's 2009 programs.
Late November	NMSC mails to principals scholarship applications for 2009 National Merit Program Special Scholarship candidates.

2009	
January 23	Principals are mailed notification of their 2009 National Achievement Program Semifinalists who have advanced to Finalist standing, and certificates for presentation to them.
February 3	Principals are mailed notification of their 2009 National Merit Program Semifinalists who have advanced to Finalist standing, and certificates for presentation to them.
February 27	2009 Achievement Scholarship offers are mailed to recipients' home addresses and notification is sent to their principals.
March 1	Postmark deadline for students who missed taking the 2008 PSAT/NMSQT to request consideration for alternate entry to 2010 competitions conducted by NMSC.
March 11	NMSC begins mailing offers to 2009 corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners and Special Scholarship winners at their home addresses and notification to their principals.
March 25	NMSC begins mailing award offers to 2009 National Merit \$2500 Scholarship recipients at their home addresses and notification to their principals.
April 3	NMSC asks school officials to confirm their students' requests to participate in the 2010 National Achievement Scholarship Program.
April 8	Media release date for 2009 winners of Achievement Scholarship awards.
Mid-April	Some 50,000 National Merit Program entrants with the highest 2008 PSAT/NMSQT Selection Index scores are contacted through their schools and offered the College Plans Reporting Service.
April 29	NMSC begins mailing 2009 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship offers to winners at their home addresses and notification to their principals.
April 22, May 6, May 27, and July 13	Media release dates for 2009 Merit Scholarship winners.

